California GARDEN

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2001 Volume 92 No. 6 $2.00

HORTICULTURAL CALENDAR

Through Jan 6, 2002
SAN DIEGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM "Monarca: Butterfly Beyond Boundaries," Exhibition of 250-mile migration of the monarch butterfly. Visit www.sdnhm.org or 619/232-3821.

Nov. 3 Sat.
★SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION LIBRARY open from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., also the first and third Saturdays. Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 105. 619/232-5762.

Nov. 3 Sat.
WALTER ANDERSEN NURSERY GARDEN CLASS on Dormant Spray. 9:00 a.m., 3642 Enterprise St., San Diego. 619/224-8271. Free.

Nov. 3-4 Sat.-Sun.
LAKE HODGES NATIVE PLANT CLUB Sale. Sat. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sun. 9:00 a.m.-Noon. Outside Von's Market, Bernardo Center Drive, Rancho Bernardo. 760/741-0829

Nov. 3-4 Sat.-Sun.
SAN DIEGO TROPICAL FISH SOCIETY Show. 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. both days. Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 101. Free.

Nov. 5 Mon.
CGCI FLORAL DESIGN FORUM "Vista's Victorius Designers." 12:30 p.m. at Women's Club of Carlsbad, 3320 Monroe St., Carlsbad. $8. 760/749-9608.

Nov. 6 Tues.
★ALL NATURAL MATERIAL TWO-RING APPLALACHIAN BASKET CLASS Sponsored by SDFA. 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $25 includes supplies. Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104. Must pre-register. 619/232/5762.

Nov. 10 Sat.
SAN DIEGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM Garlic Basketmaking Class for grades 6 and up. 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Tecolote Nature Center. Register by phone 619/232-3821 ext. 203. Fee.

Nov. 10 Sat.
SAN DIEGO ROSE SOCIETY Fall Seminar 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **Pre-registration required by Nov. 5**. Call 619/475-1534. $20.

Nov. 10 Sat.
WALTER ANDERSEN NURSERY GARDEN CLASS on Cactus. 9:00 a.m. 3642 Enterprise St., San Diego. 619/224-8271. Free.

Nov. 13 Tues.
★GOURD ETCHING AND BURNING CLASS Sponsored by SDFA. 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $30 includes one gourd. Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104. Must pre-register. 619/232/5762.

Nov. 17 Sat.
SAN DIEGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM Adult Class. "Autumn Topiary." 10:00 a.m.-noon at Tecolote Nature Center, 5180 Tecolote Road. Register by phone 619/232/3821 ext. 203. Fee.

Nov. 17 Sat.
WALTER ANDERSEN NURSERY GARDEN CLASS on Pruning Apples and Grapes. 9:00 a.m. 3642 Enterprise St., San Diego. 619/224-8271. Free.

Nov. 17 Sat.
★SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION LIBRARY will be open. See Nov. 3 for details.

Nov. 18 Sun.
SUMI-E PAINTING AND IKEBANA Show. 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 101. 619/286-8203. Free.

Nov. 20 Tues.
★A THANKSGIVING DAY ARRANGEMENT FOR TABLE OR SIDEBOARD CLASS Sponsored by SDFA. 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $50 includes supplies. Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104. Must pre-register **by Nov. 16**. 619/232/5762.

Nov. 27 Tues.
★BASIC PINE NEEDLE CLASS: A COILED BASKET Sponsored by SDFA. 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $20 includes supplies. Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104. Must pre-register. 619/232/5762.

Dec. 1 Sat.
★SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION LIBRARY will be open. See Nov. 3 for details.

Dec. 1 Sat.
WALTER ANDERSEN NURSERY GARDEN CLASS on Pruning Peaches and Nectarines. 9:00 a.m. 3642 Enterprise St., San Diego. 619/224-8271. Free.

(continued on page 164)

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for 91 Years

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NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2001

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COVER Illustration of *Camellia sasanqua* 'Hana-Jiman', original photograph by Betty Newton, computer enhanced by James Dery, DBF Photographic.

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BALBOA PARK VISITORS CENTER, HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY, 1549 El Prado, San Diego CA 92101
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FLOWER SHOWS: Show chairman contact *California Garden*, 619/232-5762 if you want the magazine sold at your show.

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Dec. 3 Mon.

CGCI FLORAL DESIGN FORUM "Cathleen Atkinson, Flower Show School Instructor in Creative and Abstract." 12:30 p.m. at Women's Club of Carlsbad, 3320 Monroe St., Carlsbad. $8. 760/749-9608.

Dec. 4 Tues.

★SPECIAL HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENT CLASS Sponsored by SDFA. 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $50 includes materials. Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104. Pre-register by **Nov. 30**. 619/232/5762.

Dec. 4 Tues.

LA JOLLA GARDEN CLUB 26th Annual Holiday Tea and Bazaar. 12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Torrey Pines Christian Church, 8320 North La Jolla Scenic Dr. 858/273-0407. $10 admission.

Dec. 7-8 Fri.-Sat.

★SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION Annual Holiday Show "A Floral Journey Through Books." Part of 24th Christmas on the Prado. Fri. 5:00-10:00 p.m. Sat. 5:00-10:00 p.m. 619/232-5762. Free.

Dec. 7-9 Fri.-Sun. also Dec. 14-23, 26-30

QUAIL BOTANICAL GARDENS 5th Annual Garden of Lights. 5-9 p.m. $5 non-members, $3 members, children under 12 free. 230 Quail Gardens Drive, Encinitas. 760/436-3036.

Dec. 8 Sat.

WALTER ANDERSEN NURSERY GARDEN CLASS on Rose Pruning (first class). 9:00 a.m. 3642 Enterprise St., San Diego. 619/224-8271. Free.

Dec. 11 Tues.

★GOURD JEWELRY MAKING CLASS Sponsored by SDFA. 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $15 includes materials. Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 104. Must pre-register. 619/232/5762.

Dec. 15 Sat.

★SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION LIBRARY will be open. See Nov. 3 for details.

Dec. 15 Sat.

WALTER ANDERSEN NURSERY GARDEN CLASS on Preparing for New Roses. 9:00 a.m. 3642 Enterprise St., San Diego. 619/224-8271. Free.

Dec. 29 Sat.

WALTER ANDERSEN NURSERY GARDEN CLASS on Pruning Apricots and Plums. 9:00 a.m. 3642 Enterprise St., San Diego. 619/224-8271. Free.

BALBOA PARK

SAN DIEGO JAPANESE FRIENDSHIP GARDEN Open Tues. thru Sun. 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Docent tours with reservations. Fee. 619/232-2721.

OFFSHOOT TOURS Ranger guided. Various topics. Saturdays 10:00 a.m. Meet at Visitors Center in Plaza de Panama. 619/235-1121. Free.

INTERPRETIVE WALKS Ranger guided. History oriented topics. Meet at Visitors Center in Plaza de Panama. Tuesdays and Sundays at 1:00 p.m. Free.

ONGOING EVENTS

SAN DIEGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM Canyoneer Walks. Sat-Sun. Sept-July. 619/232-3821 ext 203 or www.sdnhm.org for locations, times and directions. Free.

QUAIL BOTANICAL GARDENS Garden Tours & Events. 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. 230 Quail Gardens Drive, Encinitas. 760/436-3036 or www.qbgardens.com. General Admission.

BLUE SKY ECOLOGICAL RESERVE Walks. Poway. Sat. & Sun. 9:00 a.m. 858/679-5469.

WALKABOUT INTERNATIONAL Local Guided Walks. Newsletter. 619/231-SHOE. Free.

CUYAMACA COLLEGE Water Conservation Garden Landscape Seminar on 2nd Saturday of each month. 9:30 a.m. Docent tours Sat. 10:30 a.m. and Sun. 1:30 p.m. 619/660-0614. Free.

THE HUNTINGTON is open Tuesday through Friday noon to 4:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Closed Monday and most holidays. $10.00 adults, $8.50 seniors, $7 students (12-18), under 12 and members free. Group rate (10+) $7. First Thursday of each month free to all visitors. 626/405-2100 or www.huntington.org.

GARDENING CLASSES

JOYCE GEMMELL

6 WEEK COURSE

Fruit Tree, Vine, and Berry

Nov. 2-Dec. 14 Fri. A.M.

Foothills Adult Center. 9:00 a.m.-12:10 p.m., Room 12, 1550 Melody Lane, El Cajon. 619/401-4122. $15.

CONNIE BECK

12 WEEK COURSE

Home Landscape I - Basics of Organic Gardening

Jan. 9 Wed. P.M.

Santana High School. 6:30-8:30 p.m., Room 105, 9915 Magnolia, Santee. 619/749-4059 $22.

Deadline for submission to **HORTICULTURAL CALENDAR** for JANUARY/FEBRUARY issue is NOVEMBER 15. **SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION** is not responsible for changes that are submitted late by the organizations.

THESE BOOKS ARE GREAT GIFTS FOR A SERIOUS GARDENER!

KATE SESSIONS BOOK

The complete collection of writings by Kate Sessions in *California Garden* magazine from 1909 until 1939 is now available at the San Diego Floral Association office in Room 105, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. The book contains a plant index and many changes in plant names, particularly scientific, have been noted.

Often known as the "Mother of Balboa Park," for over fifty years she devoted her life to helping people grow beautiful plants in San Diego. She tells how, in this book that is for sale in the San Diego Floral Office for $18.00 (tax included) — $15.00 (tax included, for members). If you wish a copy mailed to you, use the coupon below and enclose $3.00 for handling and mailing.

The Complete Writings of Kate Sessions 1909-1939

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ROLAND HOYT BOOK REPRINT

ORNAMENTAL PLANTS FOR SUBTROPICAL REGIONS by Roland Hoyt has been reprinted by his sons. The book has been available only at rare book stores until now. (Going Rate $65.00) Bill and Mike have donated the books to San Diego Floral Association. The books will sell for $14.50 (tax included). $10 of each book sale will be added to the scholarship fund established in the name of Ethel and Roland Hoyt. The books are available at the San Diego Floral office in Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. They can be mailed.

If you are a newcomer to San Diego you probably do not know about Roland Hoyt. He was one of our earliest landscape architects and is responsible for the landscaping of Mission Bay, the Community Concourse, and many noteworthy gardens around the city. At the time this book was written, there was no guide for Southern California that listed plants by their needs and requirements. It is still the most reliable guide available. The later half of the book is a writen description and sketch of each plant in alphabetical order. In recent years many scientific names have been changed but there is an updated nomeclature list at the end of the book. The original 1940 book was published as a pocketbook, but this is enlarged—it is a handsome hardback book 7" x 10½". The price of the book (tax included) is $14.50. Handling and postage is an additional $3.00.

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Roland Hoyt

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Gleanings . . .

gathered by barbara jones

NATIONAL TREE . . .
The oak has been selected by popular vote as America's National Tree. The voting was supervised by the National Arbor Day Foundation. A commemorative tree planting ceremony was held on National Arbor Day, April 27, 2001, on the Capitol Grounds in Washington, D.C. In the voting, the redwood won second-place and dogwood, maple, and pine were the next most popular.

To make the oak the official national tree the appropriate legislation must be passed in Congress. In the press release received by San Diego Floral Association it was not stated if the National Tree was to be a specific oak or the generic oak.

OXYGEN TRIVIA . . .
Every gallon of gasoline burned in an automobile produces and releases 20 pounds of carbon dioxide into the air. When a tree reaches maturity, it produces approximately 5 pounds of pure oxygen each day — this can provide oxygen for four people. We all remember the wall charts that used to be displayed in schoolrooms showing a tree combining carbon dioxide with water in a tree leaf to produce oxygen. This is done with the aid of chlorophyll, of course.

Research has shown that houseplants also release significant amounts of oxygen into our homes and offices.

BALBOA PARK LATHHOUSE ...
We were all saddened to see the beautiful, historic lathhouse in Balboa Park close in September. If you looked closely you could see the missing and damaged laths. Not only will the redwood lath be replaced but the stucco will be repaired and the building will be painted and termited. It should be finished and opened in about 8 months — around May. While this is going on, care is being taken by the San Diego Park and Recreation Nursery Gardeners to protect the plantings.

Trivia — this is one of the largest lath structures in the world; the last time the lath was replaced it took over 12 miles of lath (70,000 feet); the original building was a major attraction of the 1915 Exposition.

TOP DRESSING POTS . . .
Top dressing means adding something to the soil surface with the primary purpose of supplying nutrients. (Mulch is used to retain moisture and discourage weeds.) It can be manure alone or fertilizer mixed with soil, humus or peat moss. Before adding, the surface of the soil should be loosened by scratching lightly or poking holes with a stick or fork. Care must be taken not to disturb the surface roots. After applying the top dressing, the pot should be watered well with a fine spray.

When doing amaryllis, all of the old surface soil should be removed plus any offset bulbs. (Plant the offset bulbs in another pot.) New soil should be placed around the bulb and firmly pressed to eliminate air pockets.

INDOOR GARDENS . . .
We are lucky in San Diego because we can have blooming outdoor gardens year-round, but many live in apartments and must garden indoors. Here are some rules for successfully growing indoor gardens in large containers.
(1) In the same container use plants that have similar light, moisture, and temperature requirements.
(2) Select plants that will not grow too large for the container.
(3) Select containers that are deep enough to accommodate a layer of soil thick enough for the plant roots and a layer of drainage material.
(4) If the container does not have drainage holes, place at least a two-inch layer of pebbles or small gravel on the bottom, topped with a thin layer of granulated charcoal.
(5) If plants are transplanted from smaller pots to a larger container, care must be taken to disturb the roots as little as possible. Soil should be gently added, the container gently tapped to level the surface, and then watered. If the soil settles, more soil should be added around the plants. The surface should be level.

HOLIDAY GIFTS . . .
'Tis the season of celebrations — many of which involve the exchange of gifts. Maybe this is the time to start giving a traditional gift to a special old friend or to all of your friends. One woman I know gives those complete kits for planting an amaryllis in a pot; another gives year's subscriptions to *California Garden*. Not only are these thoughtful gifts for a gardening friend, but one does not have to rack the brain for new ideas every year.

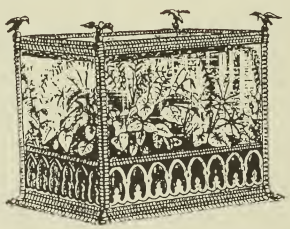
Happy Holidays!

MINIATURE GLASSHOUSE

BY BARBARA S. JONES

I HAVE A NEW miniature glasshouse 5″ x 7″ x 8″ high. Pictures show that they were popular during the Victorian Period, but little is known or written about them now. During the Victorian Period they were called Wardian Cases — the name alone is enough to interest one in the history.

The science of growing plants in sealed glass containers was accidentally discovered in London, England by Dr. Nathaniel Ward. He wanted to observe the emergence of a sphinx moth. In 1829, he placed the chrysalis in moist soil in a wide-mouthed jar with a cover. After a while some ferns developed. He never opened the jar and the fern lived for four years. He started to experiment with growing other plants. He noted that during the heat of the day water condensed on the internal surface of the glass and returned to the soil thus maintaining the same degree of humidity. In 1842, he published a slim book *The Growth of Plants in Closely Glazed Cases*. In his book he recommended that closed cases could be used as decorations for homes and in transporting plants on long sea journeys. His suggestions were quickly taken.



The Victorian Period was an exciting time in horticulture. Englishmen had always been interested in the importation of plants. Because of the slowness of sailing ships, most of the plants died on the trip — especially the tropical ones. The steamship was invented and time of transport was drastically reduced. Large shipping cases, called Waradian Cases, were used to protect delicate plants during shipping. These cases were made of wood and had at least one side and the top made of glass. The living plants were shipped in soil filled tubs. This also was the period when large glasshouses, called *Crystal Palaces*, became popular with the wealthy. In 1812, the first manual in English was published on the construction and maintenance of glasshouses. In 1845 the excise tax on sheet glass was removed so glasshouses were not prohibitive in price. Add all this to the Victorian style of overdecorating everything, and plant growing in the home drastically increased. Even those with modest incomes had miniature glasshouses in which to grow exotic plants.

Prior to the Victorian Period, glasshouse horticulture was in its infancy in North America. This was due primarily to the lack of technology, although the first American glasshouse was built in 1736. Americans "loved" everything Victorian and quickly adopted the miniature glasshouses for their parlors. The Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. has some delightful ones in their collection.

Glasshouses were not invented in this period. It is known that the Romans used heated houses (with windows made of mica) called *Specularia*. History tells that Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar (42BC-37BC) was able to have his daily cucumber because a Specularia was used.

My miniature greenhouse has a 2-inch high clear plastic growing tray in the bottom. The instructions say to place a ½-inch layer of small gravel on the bottom and cover with a good draining potting soil. It has a peaked roof—it's not a terrarium. (Aquariums with covers are often used as glasshouses.)

Because of the lack of information, I sought other authorities. Most recommend that a bit of aquarium charcoal be added to the gravel. One can plant in soil placed on top of the gravel or use pots of soil. All authorities stated that strong light was needed, but no direct sun. Some advised that the soil could be carefully fertilized, but soil in a miniature glasshouse was very slow to lose nutrients. If drops of water accumulate on the glass, it means there is too much water and it needs to be ventilated. But, one must be careful to not let the soil dry. Too much water condensation will encourage the growth of unsightly algae or mold — so the inside of the glasshouse should be wiped with a clean cloth at regular intervals.

Apparently orchids grow well in small glasshouses. (Mine is too small.) Ferns are recommended. (That's an idea!) It has been over a month and my glasshouse is still empty. I'm trying to decide. Guess it will take another trip to the local nursery!□

Barbara S. Jones has been gardening in San Diego for over sixty years and writing for California Garden for thirty-one years.

Sasanqua Camellias To See This Fall

CULTIVAR NAME	FLOWER COLOR	FLOWER FORM	GROWTH HABIT
'Apple Blossom' 1	white/blush pink edge	single	spreading
'Bonanza' 2,3	deep red	large, semi-peony	low, moderate growth, slightly upright
'Cleopatra' 1,3	3-4 inches rose pink	semi-double	upright
'Hana-Jiman' 3	white with pink edge	large, single	open shrub, v-crotches to 9 feet
'Jean May' 1	shell pink	double flower	compact, upright
'Kanjiro' 3	rose pink, darker at edge	large double	upright
'Setsugekka' 1,3	white, ruffled	large, semi-double	upright, bushy
'Shishi-Gashira' 2,3	orchid-rose	semi-double	more upright than "Bonanza"
'Showa-No-Sakae' 3	soft, clear pink	semi-double to peony form	vigorous, low growth
'Yuletide' 1,2,3	brilliant orange-red, bright yellow stamens	single	erect, compact

1. El Sambrador Nursery — 302 Hollister Street, Chula Vista
2. Plant House Nursery — 1163 N. Second Street, El Cajon
3. Green Gardens Nursery — 4910 Cass Street, Pacific Beach

We also have a fountainhead of superb camellia breeding and nursery plants in Southern California with Nuccio's Nursery, 3555 Chaney Trail, Altadena, California. Closed Wednesday and Thursday.

SASANQUA CAMELLIAS

BY BETTY NEWTON

YOU ARE FORTUNATE IF you can find a place to include *Camellia sasanqua* in your landscape. Usually graceful shrubs, sometimes small trees, the varieties of this particular species bloom earlier in the year than their big brother, *Camellia japonica*. *C. sasanqua*s bloom in fall–right now—in profusion. Keep them out of the wind or the flowers will shatter. Perhaps you have purchased a new home or are redoing the landscape of an older one. Oh, opportunity!

C. sasanqua will never be mistaken for tight India hawthorn (*Rhaphiolepis*) or 'Wheeler's Dwarf' mock orange *(Pittosporum tobira)*. The flowering shrub grows more open. They fit in with our more relaxed landscaping today or offer lightening contrast to tighter shrub forms.

To know these particular shrubs is to love them and they are quite easy to care for. They ask one-hour drainage. You can achieve that by building up the soil where they will grow. The soil should be about half organic matter but does not need to be terribly acid. All camellias want their roots very high in the soil. Use a two-inch mulch, but *pull that out* five inches from the trunk. That makes oxygen more available. They want to be fertilized ever so gently as they begin to grow, (just a *little* nitrogen or use a slow-releasing form) and start even when they are covered with flowers. Sansanquas will grow in full sun from coast to inland valleys, but need some shade in the interior (read Dulzura). They can suffer frost damage, but I have seen them happy in Alpine, which dips below twenty-eight degrees regularly.

Camellias in general have been available in the West over 200 years. They are part of our nation's history, in the southern states and from the Pacific Northwest to Southern California. Charleston, South Carolina preserves the home and grounds of Middleton Place, a rice plantation in commerce in the eighteenth century. It had and has a grove of glossy dark-green *C. japonicas* under the oaks. When the Orient opened to trade we eagerly imported their azaleas, rhododendrons, tea and china roses, camellias, and more.

And *C. japonica*s were also planted around California's capitol in Sacramento probably a hundred years ago. Some are now 25 feet tall.

*C. japonica*s grow wild in southern China, Japan, and the peninsula that holds Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos. The smaller, narrower-leaved species, *C. sasanqua*, is more limited in range being native to Japan and the Ryukyu Islands.

*C. sasanqua*s, like their bigger brothers, can run out of water. I lost some planted in the rose-perennial border. But I should try again. In contrast, City of El Cajon grew 'Shishi-Gashira' as a beautiful ground cover in handsome raised planters in full sun for at least ten years. I thought the plants were star jasmine until I saw them bearing gorgeous three-inch medium pink flowers.

I saw the glamour girl of them all, 'Hana-Jiman', planted all around a classy new building in El Cajon. They were at the top of a slope. Sounds perfect, but after a few years the tips of all the shrubs turned brown, burned brown. They died. We had clear evidence that the camellias were being watered shallowly. The plants were trying to grow in salty soil. We should treat camellias like avocados and leach them every fourth watering—using twenty percent more water than usual. Gypsum would help leach those objectionable salts.

Certain *C. sasanqua* cultivars have long been available. Some bred here; others in Japan. I talked with three local nurseries that have these and other varieties now or always carry them. I have charted these opposite, but until you see these lovely, light-textured flowers in person you have little sense of how lovely they are. I spoke with Jose Ramos, Jr., manager of El Sombrador Nursery, Dave Burnett, owner of Plant House Nursery, and Luke Sandri, manager of Green Gardens Nursery. Browse the nurseries this season and see what is available to use in landscaping or in a Japanese garden setting. □

Betty Newton teaches for Grossmont Adult Education. Photograph by the author.

ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS® FOR 2002

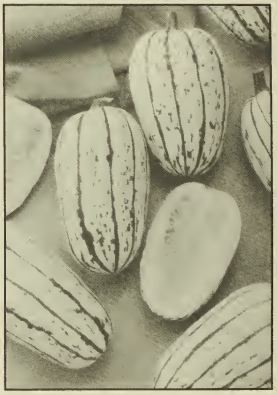
Pelargonium 'Black Magic Rose' F_1*
Common name: **geranium**
Flower color: **rose with white eye**
Form: **single**
Dimensions: **10-14″ tall, 14-18″ wide**
Foliage color: **black center with green edge**
Location: **best in full sun**
Features: **exceptionally dark foliage, heat tolerant, perfect for containers**

Viola 'Ultima Morpho' F_1*
Common name: **pansy**
Flower color: **mid-blue and yellow**
Dimensions: **5-8″ tall, 8-10″ wide**
Features: **free flowering all season, excellent performance in containers**

Petunia 'Tidal Wave Silver' F_1*
Flower color: **silvery white with dark purple centers**
Dimensions: **2-3′ tall if spaced closely (about 6″) and given support; 16-22″ tall if spaced a foot apart**
Features: **botrytis resistant, no pinching or pruning required**

Reprinted by permission of All-America Selections. Seeds and plants of these Selections will be available in stores and catalogs in the coming months.
More Selections in our next issue.

Cucumber 'Diva'
Form: **fruit best at 4-5″**
Time from sowing to harvest: **58 days**
Features: **sweet, non-bitter flavor; crisp texture; high yield; does not require pollen to set fruit; resistant to scab and tolerant to powdery and downy mildews**



Squash 'Cornell's Bush Delicata'
Common name: **winter squash**
Dimensions: **sends out 4-6′ runners late in season**
Flesh color: **orange**
Time from sowing to harvest: **100 days**
Features: **rich in Vitamin A; flesh fine textured without coarse strings; long shelf life; tolerant to powdery mildew; compact habit**

Ornamental Pepper 'Chilly Chili' F_1*
Fruit color: **yellow to orange to red**
Form: **2″ long fruit**
Dimensions: **1′ tall, 6-10″ wide**
Features: **"heat" has been bred out, heat tolerant**

*[Editor's note: The term "F_1" indicates the first generation progeny of a cross. F_1 hybrids will not breed true from their own seed.

Disease and pest resistance have been developed for many crops. These are indicated on seed package or in catalog by an "N" for nematodes, an "F" for fungus, or a "V" for virus.]

PROPAGATING SALVIAS

BY JEANINE DE HART

Salvia coccinea
'Lady in Red'

Salvia farinacea
'Strata'

Salvia nemorosa
'May Night'

SALVIAS ARE INTERESTING TO any gardener, both native plant gardeners and non-native plant gardeners. There are salvias for everyone.

There is no more beautiful salvia than our native *Salvia clevelandii*. Depending on where it occurs, it can be a medium blue or a very intense electric blue. I have seen this bright blue in Coronado Hills, San Marcos as well as almost on the coast.

When planting seeds of the native species, plant plenty. There is no need for pre-treatment, but germination will be low. White sage (*Salvia apiana*), black sage (*S. mellifera*) and Cleveland sage (*S. clevelandii*) can be grown from seed. The seeds of these and most other species need to be planted in late fall or in winter to be successful.

There are lots of cultivars among the sages—some native cultivars as well as a myriad of nonnative or part native cultivars. These need to be propagated vegetatively to preserve their unique properties.

The first thing to do is to prepare the soil you are going to use. I prefer a mixture of nine parts perlite and one part peat moss. This needs to be thoroughly mixed and dampened. This makes a slightly acid mix that causes larger, softer calluses with better rooting. Alkali soils can adversely affect rooting. When mixing the peat moss and perlite wear a mask as perlite can be damaging to the lungs.

Put mix in the flat or pot into which you are going to stick the cuttings. Next you need a rooting hormone. These are available both in liquid and powder form. Rootone is one that comes in powder form. You want a concentration that says for medium or difficult plants. This works best on natives. After making your cuts, dip the bottom ½″ into the rooting hormone and then into the plant mixture. Use a pencil to make the hole as, otherwise the powder will be rubbed off!

Your cuttings should be semisoft. They can be anywhere from 4-6″ long. Cut the bottom on an angle. Dip them into the rooting hormone and stick them into the planting medium, making sure there are at least two growth nodes that are in the soil. Either be prepared to mist them several times a day or cover with plastic to raise the humidity. Hold them in the shade at this point. After the roots form, remove the plastic if it is used. Reduce the misting if you are doing that. Water well but not often as their fragile roots will not take up much water. Err on the dry side.

When well rooted, plant up. Enjoy!

Jeanine De Hart, at age fifty, graduated from SDSU with a degree in botany in order to pursue a career in California native plants.

S. coccinea and *S. farinacea* drawings from All-America Selections. *S. nemorosa* from Perennial Plant Assoc.

CHOOSING ROSES TO GROW

BY MARIANNE TRUBY

AT THIS TIME OF the year, when bare-root stock is available, gardeners often ask me to recommend roses. I usually answer by asking if they are growing roses and if so, what varieties they have. All too frequently I find they are new to the area but did grow roses "back home."

Favorite roses from other areas are frequently not available here in Southern California. I find in many cases it is hard to convince people that the roses grown so well in other areas of the country simply do not adapt well to our climate. Given names of the varieties formerly grown in other areas I am usually able to suggest similar varieties that do well here. Four or five rosarians, asked to list favorite roses grown here in our area, will produce completely different lists—primarily because of the variety of climates and soil conditions within San Diego County. Add to that the old saying "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," which creates a whole new conflict.

At one time, individual lists produced by local societies were very helpful and fairly reliable. The San Diego area, having exploded from seaside to desert, encompasses such a variety of growing conditions that researching the best varieties for your garden can be challenging! The trend to introduce new types of roses grown for specific areas, (ground covers, fences, etc.) along with "new" cultivars of hybrid teas, floribundas, miniatures, French roses, and English roses make creating a recommended list almost impossible. This means that availability of particular varieties can become a "grand hunt"! Mail order roses from colorful catalogs can be tempting. As a general rule, roses grown in California and available at reputable nurseries will produce best results.

I do not grow roses as landscape plants— I grow them for cut flowers and judge them on their ability to produce a specimen of sturdy stem, beautiful foliage, and a bloom that is distinctive! Florists roses, grown in greenhouses, seem to lack fragrance in most varieties, and have caused an outcry that roses no longer have fragrance. NOT TRUE! Unfortunately, this has resulted in many new introductions that seem to be introduced for no other reason than that they have fragrance! Many of these have little else to recommend them. No rose grown in Southern California will outdo the fragrance produced by 'Double Delight' and many other varieties produced by California Hybridizers such as Swim, Lindquist, and Lammerts for instance.

Yes, there are roses to meet all your needs, landscape roses, miniature roses, carpet roses, etc. Look for the ones that best supply your needs. In our area it

is possible to have roses year around. Your location, your growing conditions should be the basis of your choice of varieties. Due to fact that many homes in San Diego area have very limited space, careful selection is essential. If you have been told roses are too much trouble or difficult to grow, look around some established areas and you will see few gardens that do not include roses. They will even thrive on neglect for long periods of time and snap back given even reasonable care. Much too often even rosarians give too much time to their problems, rather than extolling their beauty. It is after all our National Flower.

ROSE WALK OF FAME

Located behind the Armstrong Garden Center, off I-5 at Palomar Airport Road in Carlsbad, the Rose Walk of Fame will provide a wonderful opportunity for rosarians to witness the ongoing changes in the world of roses.

"All-American Rose Selections" from 1940 to 2002 have been planted in a one-of-a-kind presentation of the AARS 173-plus varieties in a year by year sequence. I was surprised to see that I still have growing in my garden 19 of these winning varieties. They include 'Queen Elizabeth', 'Granada', 'Duet', 'Brigadoon', 'Honor', 'Double Delight', 'Touch of Class', and 'Fame' to name a few.

Visit the gardens at various times of the year to evaluate and admire the evolving rose types. □

Marianne Truby was ARS director of the Pacific Southwest District 1980 to 1983.

CITY FARMERS NURSERY: A PLACE FOR PLANTS AND PEOPLE TOO

BY PAT PAWLOWSKI

I WAS ON A treasure hunt—and the gold I was searching for was *Asclepias curassavica* 'Silky Gold', a type of milkweed. As almost every butterfly-besotted gardener knows, milkweed is the host plant for the monarch butterfly, a species I wanted to attract to my garden. The vision of just one butterfly fluttering by can spice up your garden and brighten your spirits; think what the sight of a whole bunch could do! Thus, in order to attract the most butterflies, you should provide the host plant for the caterpillar stage and nectar plants for the adult (butterfly) stage.

Although monarchs will lay their eggs on any of dozens of varieties of milkweed, I had my heart set on the 'Silky Gold' cultivar. I had been searching for that particular milkweed in various nurseries and had not had any luck. That is, until I visited City Farmers Nursery. There they were, several 'Silky Gold's, peering jauntily out from among a population of dozens of different kinds of plants. I pounced.

Later, I went past a huge array of unusual, eye-catching plants, to the nursery's aquarium to search for another golden-hued item: Rosy-red minnows (*Pimephales promelas*), which are actually a warm glowing golden color. They are a subspecies of the distinctively-named fathead minnow. According to a very knowledgeable nurseryman named Michael Stewart who works at City Farmers, rosy-red fatheads are even better at mosquito control in ponds than mosquito fish. He recommends them highly. Rosy-red fatheads are, for sure, much more colorful. With a slender body tapering down to a tiny tail, their heads are indeed fatter than the rest of them. Their eyes bug out, charmingly. Might they even be education-oriented? After all, they tend to swim in schools.

With all these attributes going for rosy-red fatheads, I naturally prepared to buy some. On my way back to the checkout, many plants beckoned: sages ranging from a lavender 1½′ *Salvia verticillata* 'Purple Rain' to a 7′ forsythia sage (*Salvia madrensis*) with its bright yellow blooms. A huge-coned, white- petaled coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea* 'White Swan') nodded its flower heads at me, and a golden gem called Maximilian's sunflower (*Helianthus maximilianii*) glowed in the sunshine.

There were many kinds of veggies, too; and for those with vampirophobia, even twenty kinds of garlic.

A side path led to pools that contain hardy and tropical water lilies. In the cooler months, when lilies go dormant, City Farmers Nursery offers water plants such as water hawthorn (*Aponogeton distachyos*) that will endure cold water and weather; that way, your pond will not have to look naked in the winter.

A little further on, under an archway framed with *Passiflora* X *alato-caerulea* 'Ruby Glow', there were flamboyant steps made out of used tires, their holes filled with gravel. These led the way skyward to an upper level, also crammed with many kinds of shrubs, trees, and grasses. Since butterflies and beneficial insects are drawn to the nectar of lantana (*Lantana spp.*), and as you may have guessed, I am partial to the above-mentioned bugs, I naturally ambled over to where the many varieties of lantanas luxuriated, blooming in red, pink, orange, yellow, white, purple, and all shades between. Roses reigned in another section.

City Farmers Nursery also mixes its own soils and will create custom soil blends for you. It offers worm castings, which make an excellent soil enhancer. I bought a bag of those, too.

Inside the nursery office, my eye fell upon a unique collection of jewelry nesting comfortably in a wooden case. As I retrieved my fallen eye, a miniature piece of jewelry seemed to leap into my hand. It was a tiny wheelbarrow.

It was added to my growing collection of purchasables. Then, as I looked around, I realized that this nursery with its cozy office was not just a place to buy plants: It was much more. There was a piano to play if you felt like it. There was a rocker to sit in if you were tired. There were gardening books to buy if you wanted your plant knowledge to grow. There was a large selection of hydroponic supplies. There were all sorts of organic gardening products—and organic vegetable seeds, too—for the environmentally conscious. There was a Pez holder collection to gaze at in moments of frivolity. On the nursery grounds there were animals for children to view. For the freshly famished, there was even a deli, Nate's, named in loving memory of Bill's father.

And, most invaluable to me, there was good, honest gardening information provided by Bill and Patty Tall, the owners. In this sell-at-any-cost marketing age, it is

(continued on page 182)

PURPLE ALLAMANDA VINE DOES WELL HERE.

BY BETTY NEWTON

NICK AND DONIA GADLER of Fletcher Hills above El Cajon Valley have something you do not have. They have a very beautiful plant that few gardeners in Southern California have. Several plants of *Cryptostegia grandiflora* create over a 50-foot by 5-foot hedge on a chain link fence. The beautiful, heavy-textured, lavender, trumpet flowers bloom once the weather warms — summer and early fall.

This vine with elongated leaves the heavy texture of Indian laurel fig has some common names. *Hortus Third* calls it "rubber vine" as does Mission Hills Nursery. That same book suggests "purple allamanda." That is what made me think it was not for us. I knew *Allamanda*s were very comfortable in Hawaii. And one book suggests they need higher humidity than we normally have here. I assumed this was true until I found three true *Allamanda*s (not *Cryptostegia)* a mile from our east county home blooming generously in rich yellow. "An unusual year," I thought. "And besides, that gardener also has a half barrel of multiplying true lilies so she must be more talented than I."

I knew about *Cryptostegia* (think Halloween to remember the first syllable, then you will get that name) only because a neighbor, Don Boyer, brought me a blooming 12-inch piece two years ago. I carried it around for days to impress friends. Fausto Palafox of Mission Hills Nursery said he was getting his plants from Florida. He reported the vine looked gorgeous growing over ruins in Honduras when he visited.

I had not thought much about the plant for two years and then suddenly there was 50 healthy feet of it! The plants were on the property when the Gadlers bought their house, but Nick said that they did not look good. He began to water more often and feeds generously now twice a year. The plants took off. They cover young passionflower plants that Gadler is growing along the same fence.

You will like the color and the heavy texture of this vine's flowers. Grown with *Distictis* 'Rivers', the pink-lavender trumpet flower that blooms a little earlier, then simultaneously, your landscape would have an intriguing combination.

If you have 20 feet to spare and live within 25 miles of the ocean, it seems you have a new, interesting vine at your disposal. You can see plants at Mission Hills Nursery. Walter Andersen Nursery, Poway, is trying to locate it. The literature says it roots well on a heated table. Seeds might be another source. Seeds develop in a thick, wide pod that looks like two huge tradescantia leaves from the top. See that in the drawing.

Gardening certainly does have its frontiers. Such adventure!□

Betty Newton teaches for Grossmont Adult Education.

Illustration by Cherie Ann Gossett.

Now is the Time . . .

A CULTURAL CALENDAR OF CARE FROM OUR AFFILIATES, UC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION, AND *CALIFORNIA GARDEN* STAFF

AFRICAN VIOLETS

NOW IS THE TIME

TO PREVENT extreme differences between night and day temperatures.

TO KEEP the plants well groomed and repot those that have outgrown their pots. A good rule—the pot should be ⅓ the diameter of the leaf span.

TO CONTINUE to have good circulation of air around the plants.

TO PROVIDE adequate humidity; monitor the temperature carefully.

TO PLAN on using your plants with holiday decorations; plant in containers to match color scheme.

BEGONIAS

Margaret Lee

NOW IS THE TIME

TO CLEAN up all debris—remove dead leaves and spent blooms.

TO WATER as needed.

TO PUT a top dressing of your favorite mulch around plants to replace any soil or mulch washed away by fall rains.

TO GIVE a light feeding several times a month to help the plants withstand any adverse conditions a little better.

TO SPRAY for mildew control.

TO ALLOW tuberous begonias to die back on their own, put aside and let rest but sprinkle occasionally.

TO BE VIGILANT for insects; spray for mealybugs and other pests.

BONSAI

San Diego Bonsai Club

NOW IS THE TIME

TO REDUCE watering, deciduous trees require just enough to keep them from drying out.

TO MOVE plants into shade if a hot spell occurs. Avoid a second growth period during this time—it will weaken the trees.

TO REFRAIN from fertilizing or transplanting at this time.

TO KEEP deciduous trees protected from sudden changes of temperature.

TO REMOVE any old leaves, fruit, or seeds from deciduous trees.

TO PRUNE black pines by cutting the candles about half length.

TO GRAFT conifers in December.

BROMELIADS

Mary Siemers

NOW IS THE TIME

TO STOP fertilizing during fall and winter months, except those that are kept in a greenhouse.

TO REDUCE the frequency of watering when weather turns cooler.

TO PROTECT your plants from hail damage during the rainy season by providing overhead protection such as shade cloth that will allow plenty of light.

TO PROTECT plants from freezing temperatures by covering with sheets or newspaper.

TO KEEP plants clean by cutting spent blooms and dead leaves with scissors.

TO SPACE plants apart to allow air circulation. This helps to prevent scale.

CACTI & SUCCULENTS

Joseph A. Betzler

NOW IS THE TIME

TO WATCH your plants. Most cacti and succulents have a dormancy period. Depending on the weather, many winter growers may start early growing.

TO FERTILIZE the plants that are actively growing.

TO WATER only in the morning on a day that is going to be warm. By doing this, no standing water will be on plants in the evening.

TO PROTECT tender plants from excessive cold and winter rains. Repair cracks and leaks in shelters before the rains arrive.

TO KEEP ants under control; they transport aphids and mealybugs.

TO REMEMBER that the growth of fungi and bacteria can be fostered when plants become too cold during the cold evenings .

TO START looking for winter growing succulents to add as an extra dimension to your collection.

TO CLEAN up your plants' growing area.

CAMELLIAS

Les Baskerville

NOW IS THE TIME

TO FEED with a 2-10-10 or 0-10-10 fertilizer to encourage bud development, once a month.

TO CONTINUE disbudding to produce larger blooms.

TO PICK up all old blooms to prevent petal blight.

TO SELECT new plants while in bloom.

TO ENCOURAGE plants to have dark green leaves by feeding an iron supplement.

TO SPRAY if necessary for mites and worms.

TO KEEP a regular watering schedule, never let a plant dry out—maintain an even, moist condition.

TO MAINTAIN humidity—on any dry, hot days mist in later afternoon to keep from burning leaves.

DAHLIAS

Abe Janzen

NOW IS THE TIME

TO WITHHOLD water and fertilizer to let the plants go dormant.

TO ALLOW plants to dry—when brown about 12-inches from ground, cut off the stalk.

TO LEAVE tubers in the ground to harden off if there is good drainage. Otherwise lift roots before the heavy rains.

TO WASH clumps after digging, let dry a few hours before storing. If dividing tubers, treat cut area with soil sulfur, store in vermiculite, sand, or other medium. Store out of the weather. Be sure tubers are tagged before storing.

EPIPHYLLUMS

San Diego Epiphyllum Society

NOW IS THE TIME

TO WITHHOLD fertilizer, especially one with nitrogen. Allow the plants to become semi-dormant.

TO WATER sparingly, but do not allow plants to dry out completely.

TO PROTECT plants from exposure to the elements. Frost, hail, and strong winds can cause irreversible damage. Overexposure to harsh winter sunlight can be as detrimental as hot summer sun.

TO TIE or stake long branches so they will not break when winds and rain arrive.

TO CHECK for snails and slugs; a few granules of Sluggeta at the base of the plant are often effective and leave little to no residue.

TO MAINTAIN good grooming and prune out nonproductive branches to conserve plant energy.

FERNS

San Diego Fern Society

NOW IS THE TIME

TO CHECK containers to ensure planting mix has not completely broken down; add more mix to containers that need it.

TO BE ALERT for insects. Slugs and snails are very active.

TO WATER if it does not rain. Check plants not reached by rain.

TO APPLY a weak fertilizer solution once more before the December rest period.

TO PLANT spores and keep in a warm area.

TO CLEAN out weeds, oxalis, and debris from pots.

TO PROTECT plants at night in frost areas. Cover with newspaper or old sheets or place in garage.

FRUIT TREES AND VINES

Vincent Lazaneo, Hort. Advisor, UC Coop Extension

NOW IS THE TIME

TO PRUNE deciduous trees and vines after their foliage has dropped. Wait until early spring to prune evergreens.

TO SPRAY dormant deciduous trees and vines with horticultural oil to kill scale, insects, spider mites, and other overwintering pests.

TO SPRAY peach and nectarine trees with a fungicide such as lime sulfur (calcium polysulfide) to control leaf curl.

TO ORDER bare-root trees and vines to plant in December or January.

TO PROVIDE frost protection for young citrus and other subtropical fruit trees.

FUCHSIAS

William Selby

NOW IS THE TIME

TO ALLOW plants to rest; reduce or stop fertilizing.

TO DO heavy pruning in mild areas or in a greenhouse. Can make cuttings if a good tip available.

TO CLEAN up. Remove all dead leaves, blossoms, and debris from pots and baskets and around plants in the ground.

TO WATCH for insects, molds, and fungi in warmer areas.

TO MULCH plants left outside in areas where there is danger of frost; move baskets under cover for protection.

GERANIUMS (Pelargoniums)

Carol Roller

NOW IS THE TIME

TO WATER thoroughly when plants become somewhat dry. Watering will not need to be done as often as in the warmer seasons. Allow the excess water to drain away. Keep the foliage as dry as possible.

TO CONTINUE feeding as needed. Do not allow plants to show prolonged signs of nutritional deficiencies. Use a balanced fertilizer that can be dissolved in water. Soilless mixes need fertilizer containing micronutrients.

TO CONTINUE a pest control and disease prevention program, using all products according to the manufacturer's direction.

TO PRUNE any plants that have not been cut back. At least one green leaf should remain on every stem of regals, scenteds, and similar types. Lanky plants which were pruned in the fall can be cut again to produce compact plants.

TO MAKE cuttings from the prunings. Shelter cuttings from extreme weather. They will root faster in a warm location.

TO PINCH the rest of the plants that were pruned in the fall.

TO GIVE plants temporary shelter if the temperature

approaches freezing.

TO ROTATE plants on a regular basis in order to keep well shaped.

GREEN THUMB
Editorial Staff

NOW IS THE TIME

TO FEED bird of paradise. Cut out dead growth from clumps to improve appearance.

TO PLANT bulbs for spring blooms—daffodils, narcissus, ranunculus, anemones, scillas, callas, tulips, and hyacinths.

TO PRUNE and shape holly and pyracantha when cutting berries for holiday decorations.

TO APPLY dormant spray in December to control pests and disease next year; to use snail and slug bait regularly.

TO ENRICH your soil, prepare now for bare-root planting in late December and January.

HERBS
John Noble

NOW IS THE TIME

TO DIG and amend the ground around perennial herbs and winter flowering annual beds.

TO PLANT garlic, calendula, borage, chickweed, sage, thyme, and rosemary.

TO ADD native herbs to your landscape. Include the native sages, yerba santa, yerba mansa, yucca, mugwort, ceanothus, and elderberry.

TO HARVEST your culinary herbs: bay, basil, rosemary, thyme, lemongrass, oregano, and sage.

TO USE them fresh in preparing gourmet Thanksgiving treats.

TO MAKE dry herbal bouquets and wreaths, or preserve them fresh in herbal oils and vinaigrettes. They make delightful and consumable holiday gifts.

IRIS
San Diego/Imperial Counties Iris Society

NOW IS THE TIME

TO CLEAN beds of dead leaves and weeds; aphids winter-over in debris-filled areas.

TO SPRAY for aphids or give a light feeding of a systemic to control all sucking plant pests.

TO MAKE a final planting of bearded types, spurias, Louisianas, and Siberians.

TO PLANT bulbous type iris—Dutch, English, and Spanish for spring bloom.

TO MOVE and replant Pacific Coast natives in late December when the little white roots are showing. Water well until they are established.

NATIVE PLANTS
Jeanine De Hart

NOW IS THE TIME

TO CONTINUE watering, as the days get shorter, to augment rainfall, which may be sparse at this time of year. The natives are still putting out root growth and watering should be infrequent and deep. This will make a more drought-tolerant plant.

TO PLANT the plants you bought at the fall sales if you have not already done so. If you have clay soil, you will either have to amend it for better drainage or plant the drought-tolerant natives on mounds.

TO MULCH your beds. This will help keep the weeds down as well as conserving moisture. This keeps the roots cool and recycles nutrients back into the soil.

TO CUT BACK Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) if you have not already done so. *R. coulteri* blooms on new wood, thus needs to be cut hard each fall in order to produce the maximum flowering stalks.

TO KEEP the hummingbird feeder full as the more natives you plant the more hummingbirds you will attract to your garden!

TO LIGHTLY fertilize the plants that went in last year. Never fertilize your newly planted natives. You do not want to stimulate top growth at this time. I find that fertilizing at ½ the recommended rate is about right.

TO CONTINUE planting seeds of California wildflowers, such as California poppies, for spring bloom.

TO MAKE sure that you are not planting the natives too close together as most of them will spread as wide as they are tall.

TO MAKE root cuttings of Matilija poppy (*R. Coulteri*). Last month's *California Garden* will give instructions on how.

TO CHECK drainage after a rain. Avoid planting sensitive natives in areas with poor drainage. They are fine for such natives as sticky monkey-flower (*Mimulus guttatus*), red monkey-flower (*M. cardinalis*), or lizard plant (*Anemopsis californica)*. These are all bog plants and will bloom anywhere that there is continuous moisture.

ORCHIDS
Charles Fouquette

NOW IS THE TIME

TO FEED a dilute solution of 30-10-10 fertilizer to intergenetic *Oncidium* hybrids, *Brassidium*, *Miltonia* if they are planted in bark. If they are grown in any other medium, feed a solution of 18-18-18. (The numbers reflect a guideline, not hard and fast numbers.)

TO FEED *Cymbidium* a 30-20-20 fertilizer. Stake new spikes—do not rotate plants. Protect buds and flowers from hail, rain, or sun damage.

TO REPOT *Cattleya* if new growth is outside of the pot and the plant is in active growth. (Otherwise, wait until spring.) Feed an 18-18-18 fertilizer, or similar, during the winter and only every third watering.

TO CLEAN up old leaves, flowers, and other "trash" in growing areas. Remove shade cloth to give as much light as possible to the common growing areas. Clean the swamp

cooler; drain the water out of the bottom; protect the motor by wrapping it with a plastic trash bag after you have oiled it and checked the belts and cords.

TO CLEAN humidity spray nozzles. Remove nozzles from feed line, loosen the brass parts and take apart. Soak these parts in a glass container with a solution of ten parts water to one part swimming pool acid (*e.g.*, phosphoric, muriatic), using protective gloves and goggles. Or use pure vinegar, which works well but is slower. Through the glass container you will see when the parts are clean; rinse them with clear water and reinstall, after flushing the feed lines.

TO CHECK the heater fittings, pilot light, flues, and vents. Check that the temperature sensors and activators are set at their HI-LO settings. You must have a fresh inlet somewhere in the hothouse, for AIR. You need clean air for combustion in the heating chamber and to replace the air burned in combustion going up the flue to the outside of the hothouse. If you don't provide a clean air intake, you will have poor and unclean combustion and ethylene gas in the hothouse killing flowers.

TO LET deciduous *Dendrobium* go dormant. Stop feeding when leaves start to drop. Water just enough to maintain root moisture. (Start to fertilize and water normally next spring when buds have swollen and are starting to develop and plant is starting active growth.)

TO HAVE *Phalaenopsis* be well on their way in the flower initiation mode at this time. Increase light to about 1500 foot-candles by any means—shade cloth removal, etc. Try to duplicate the weather in the areas where phals are native (at this time of year the temperatures drop and it is very clear, cloudless, and relatively dry). You lowered the night temperature through October to 52-55 degrees while fertilizing with dilute solutions of 30-20-20 every other watering. In November, maintain the high light and increase the night temperature to 62-65 degrees (your target minimum temperature). The first week, water with clear water to flush all salts that may remain. The next three weeks, water with a solution of epsom salts, mixed 4 lbs. in 5 gals. water, applied through a Hozon proportioner. This gives the plants the magnesium sulfate they need for colorful flowers. The first week of December, flush again with clear water. The next three weeks, use a high phosphorus fertilizer to help flower production and plant turgidity. By January, you should be back to average care and fertilization. Try to maintain the high light until the temperatures get warmer, then drop the light to 1000± foot-candles until next year. Maintain air movement at all times.

ROSES

Marianne Truby

NOW IS THE TIME

TO RENOVATE your rose garden by deep-digging the area around individual bushes and incorporating organic amendments prior to fall rains. Remove roots of trees and shrubs that have been robbing your plants of water and nutrients.

TO PREPARE list of replacement and/or new varieties you wish to purchase from lists of incoming bareroots available at your local nurseries. If you have limited space, you may wish to put off purchasing newly introduced varieties until they have been grown in your locale.

TO ENJOY fall blooms that are frequently outstanding depending on weather conditions.

TO REDUCE amount of water but do not allow bushes to become too dry if fall rains do not occur.

TO REMOVE bushes no longer producing. Prepare new planting holes by adding amendments and superphosphate to existing soil to give bareroots a good growing medium.

TO PRUNE floribundas in late December but delay pruning hybrid teas until buds begin to swell in January or early February. Consult rosarians in your locale for best date.

TO CLEAN up entire rose bed and dormant spray once before pruning and again after pruning before buds leaf out.

TO PREPARE for pruning by checking your equipment. Proper equipment, clean and sharp, will make the job easier. Don't forget the gloves and knee pads.

VEGETABLES

Vincent Lazaneo, Hort. Advisor, UC Coop Extension

NOW IS THE TIME

TO REMOVE and compost warm-season vegetables to prevent pests and diseases from overwintering on them.

TO CONTINUE planting cool-season vegetables which will not be subject to frost injury.

TO PLANT seeds of short-day onions, such as 'Grano', 'Granex', or 'Crystal Wax', and garlic cloves in November for bulbs next summer.

TO PLANT dormant crowns of artichoke, asparagus, and rhubarb. To avoid crown rot of rhubarb, plant crowns in containers filled with porous potting soil and transplant into garden where drainage is good after several leaves have developed.

VEGETABLES, ANNUALS

from UC Cooperative Extension Publications

NOW IS ONE OF THE BETTER TIMES IN FROST-FREE AREAS

TO PUT IN TRANSPLANTS OF: broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower — California natives, cineraria **CONTINUED** columbine, fairy primrose (*Primula malacoides*), garden stock (*Matthiola incana)*, hollyhock, Iceland poppy, ornamental kale, pansy, pink sand verbena, pot marigold (*Calendula*), snapdragon, and viola.

TO PUT IN SEEDS OF: beets, carrots, chard, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, onion (green and dry), parsnips, spinach, and turnips — baby blue eyes, California natives, candytuft, Chinese forget-me-not *(Cynoglossum amabile*), forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatica*), lupine, sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*), spring flowering sweet pea, and Virginia stock (*Malcolmia maritima*).

ASK A MASTER GARDENER

QUESTION: **Will beneficial nematodes kill harmful nematodes?**
ANSWER: Unfortunately, no. It's not like decollate snails feeding on brown garden snails. No such luck.

Beneficial nematodes are microscopic, nonsegmented worms that occur naturally in all soils. *Steinernema carpocapsae* and *Steinernema feltiae* prey on ants, termites, and the larval and grub stages of various beetles, weevils, armyworms, cutworms, chafers, webworms, borers, maggots, fleas, ticks, fungus gnats, etc. These nematodes are truly beneficial and good to have in the garden, but they do not kill the bad nematodes.

Control harmful nematodes by rotating crops and by using the sun to rid them from the soil in a process known as **soil solarization**.

QUESTION: **How can a newcomer best learn about gardening in San Diego?**
ANSWER: Buy a copy of *Western Garden Book*, published by *Sunset* magazine, and peruse it. Talk to your neighbors. Join one or more of our garden clubs. Take an ornamental horticulture course at your community college or a gardening class at an adult education center.

QUESTION: **What can I plant in January?**
ANSWER: Lots of stuff, especially if you live in frost-free areas. See "Now Is the Time" in this issue of *California Garden* magazine.

QUESTION: **Is it too late to "dormant spray" if the tree has already begun to foliate?**
ANSWER: You will never know until you try. If you neglected to spray during the dormant season, the plant may already be under attack from disease-causing pathogens. Do not give up! You can still spray most flowering plants up to the time buds first begin to show color.

QUESTION: **How do you avoid salt buildup in potted plants?**
ANSWER: Run enough water through the pots to wash the salt away. In my more affluent days, I used bottled water on my houseplants. Now, I simply let tap water stand for a few days to let the chlorine evaporate and flush the pots before the salt builds up.

QUESTION: **How do I provide the right soil moisture if I let my plants dry out before I water?**
ANSWER: Drainage should not be confused with soil moisture. Some plants prefer a potting mix that stays moist. Others are more moderate in their moisture requirement. All soils must drain. Palms, pines, corn plants, Chinese evergreen, philodendrons, pothos, nephthytis, and prayer plants need a dry period before watering. Buddhist pine, areca palm, yucca, and spider plant need to be bone dry. Fig trees, schefflera, creeping fig, Boston fern, and peace lilies want the soil to be a little moist to the touch according to *Maintenance Techniques for Interior Plants*.

It is best to consult an encyclopedia of houseplants. Readers are strongly encouraged to tell us how they water their houseplants, either mail their experiences and their comments to The Editor, *California Garden* magazine or by e-mail to mrmort@pacbell.net.

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HOW TO GROW ASPARAGUS

BY ARTHUR DAWSON

ASPARAGUS TAKES SOME SPACE and some planning, but there is no vegetable more rewarding to the home gardener than asparagus from a well-established bed.

We have a 7-by-8-foot bed that gives us much more than we need at the height of the season. The great advantage to a big bed is that you can harvest enough spears for a generous serving for two in a single day, which means that it will all be fresh cut. In the slower part of the season, the cut spears can be saved in the refrigerator for a few days until there are enough for a meal. They will still be much superior to what you can buy in the supermarket, but there is almost nothing as delicious as really fresh asparagus. I used to wonder why anybody would bother making soup from asparagus when I had only experienced what comes out of a can. The way Helen makes it, fresh asparagus soup is as good as fresh pea soup with a distinctive yet delicate flavor.

Asparagus can be grown from seed but you probably will want to buy bare-root plants, which appear in the nurseries **in early January**. In our area, UC-157 is the best variety, so you do not want to order any other from a catalog.

A bed will produce for fifteen years or more, so it will pay off to make an effort to prepare it well. The soil should be dug up thoroughly with a generous addition of compost or other organic material. You will read that the rows should be three feet apart, but with our intensive style of gardening in raised beds, we can get four rows in an 8-foot bed. Each row is dug as a trench a foot wide and a foot deep. Asparagus needs phosphorus for root growth, and so bone meal or a high phosphorus fertilizer should be sprinkled at the bottom of the trenches and covered with a couple of inches of soil. Then the plants should be placed in the trenches with the roots well-spread out. The rows should be filled with soil so that the crowns are about an inch below the surface.

After that, there is little work to be done. The books advise you to wait two years before harvesting, but a vigorously growing bed will produce a small crop even after the first year. The male plants produce the most uniform spears and UC-157 is said to produce "mostly male," but in my experience, there are plenty of female plants. Some authorities recommend pulling them out once they have declared their sexual orientation, but by that time their roots are thoroughly entangled with their neighbors'. I have contented myself with pulling out any seedlings as soon as they appear.

The main pest is asparagus beetle. It always amazes me how quickly the beetle can find a new asparagus bed, since it seems to have no other host. They are very susceptible to rotenone, but they can be almost eliminated by not allowing any small spears to develop leaves until the cutting season is over. The beetles lay their eggs only on the fronds, not the spears, and this technique denies them a start for a good part of their breeding season. Once the bed is established, harvesting will begin in mid-February, reach its peak in the latter half of March, and continue through much of April. The spears should be cut every couple of days or even daily at the peak of the season. You will know the season is over when the new spears get thinner than a pencil. If you get more than you can eat, as you probably will, they are very satisfactory to give away. Even better, you can eat only the tenderest tips of the spears, a wildly extravagant practice if you had to buy asparagus.

A healthy asparagus patch produces a lot of foliage and can grow up 8 feet or more. It needs the wherewithal to generate all this biomass and so it should be heavily fertilized. Remember that it is the roots that provide next year's crop and so a low nitrogen fertilizer (5-10-10) is best. It should be applied just before the new growth begins (last week of January) and again when the harvest is finished. The plants should be heavily mulched to control weeds. Then they should be watered generously, but otherwise should be left undisturbed until the foliage turns completely brown at the end of November. After, the plants are cut to the ground and another mulch should be applied. □

Arthur Dawson is a retired physician with thirty years of growing experience.

Reprinted, with permission, from the February 2001 "The Spindrifter", the newsletter of The Village Garden Club of La Jolla [California].

Drawing courtesy of Shepherd's Garden Seeds.

["City Farmers Nursery" continued from page 174]

comforting to know that City Farmers is a place where they will give you information freely, and will not try to sell you something you do not need. For example, I had requested some mycorrhizal fungi to enhance my soil. They asked if I used chemical fertilizers. I replied that I did, sometimes; they then said that adding mycorrhizae to my soil probably would not work. Truth-telling instead of selling—an admirable commodity that you just cannot buy.

The two-acre City Farmers Nursery (Motto: A Little Bit of Country in the Heart of the City) is at 4832 Home Avenue, San Diego (Phone: 619-284-6358). It was started by Bill Tall. "I loved growing things as a kid," Bill says. "With my dad's, and a teacher's encouragement, I took $200 and opened City Farmers. That was 30 years ago—1972."

Bill and his wife Patty have been married for twenty-one years. When they started dating in 1974, Bill says that "Patty didn't know a tulip from a pepper tree. We dated about four or five years, planting things just to be together." Now Patty—like Bill—is a very knowledgeable horticulturist.

In addition to offering a huge array of plants for sale, Bill and Patty have made City Farmers a sort of all-around destination spot for the entire family. While the gardener of the family is busy plant-shopping, the others will surely find something else to occupy their time. It would be especially fun to visit during the holiday season, when live Christmas trees are offered for sale. After the season is over, you can bring your tired tree back to City Farmers, which has a Christmas tree recycling program.

Coveted, rare, exotic plants? Charming fish? A working piano? Unusual gifts? Knowledgeable, helpful employees? Free gardening classes and information? A deli just a few footsteps away? Just what kind of nursery is this, anyway?

The answer is clear: City Farmers Nursery is a certifiable treasure. □

Pat Pawlowski is a writer/lecturer and the wildlife garden designer for Animated Gardens, 619-390-9399.

In photograph at right, bush germander, *Teucrium fruticans* 'Azurea', in front of *Calotropis gigantea*; photograph by J. Coleman. See also back cover.

KATHY ROLLINS WINS SCHOLARSHIP

The Roland and Ethyl Hoyt Scholarship was established in memory of Roland Stewart Hoyt, a landscape architect who was instrumental in the landscaping of Presidio and Mission Bay Parks. In 1938, he wrote *Ornamental Plants for Subtropical Regions*, a book that remains the major reference for architects and horticulturists in Southern California. Ethyl Hoyt encouraged, both physically and financially, the development of flower arranging in San Diego. Both of the Hoyts were strong supporters of the Floral Association and *California Garden* magazine. Upon Ethyl Hoyt's death, the Floral Association added her name to the scholarship.

The Roland and Ethyl Hoyt Scholarship administered by San Diego Floral Association has been awarded to Katherin L. Rollins for year 2001. Rollins is a full-time honor student at Southwestern College with a major in Golf and Sports Turf Management and a minor in horticulture. She is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, International Society of Arboriculture, and the California Society of Nurserymen. In addition to her studies, Ms. Rollins works part time for Pacific Tree Farms as a horticulturist and for the City of Chula Vista as a part-time gardener.

Any student enrolled in a local institution of higher learning in a horticulture related program may apply for this scholarship, year 2002. Applications may be obtained at the San Diego Floral Office, room 105, in Casa del Prado, Balboa Park. Telephone 619-232-5762 for information.

Staff

SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION
CRAFT and FLOWER ARRANGING CLASSES
CASA DEL PRADO, ROOM 104, BALBOA PARK
9:30AM to 2:00PM
Bring a lunch, coffee will be provided
Register with San Diego Floral Association office, 619/232-5762, Call MARIE WALSH 619/298-5182 for more information

PLEASE PREREGISTER!

ALL NATURAL MATERIAL TWO-RING APPALACHIAN BASKET
Tuesday, November 6, 2001
Instructors: Martha Rosenberg and Kathy Walsh
Locally-grown basket material provided. Bring an old towel, clippers, and a bucket.
Fee: $25 Beginners welcome.

GOURD ETCHING AND BURNING
Tuesday, November 13, 2001
Instructor: Mary Jean Wydro
Learn unique ways to decorate a gourd using a dremel tool and a wood-burning tool. Some tools are available, but bring your own if available.
Fee: $30, includes one gourd.

A THANKSGIVING DAY ARRANGEMENT FOR TABLE OR SIDEBOARD
Tuesday, November 20, 2001
Instructors: Velma West and Marie Walsh
Everything included, just bring clippers
FEE: $50 For this class, you must **PREREGISTER AND PAY BY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16**

BASIC PINE NEEDLE CLASS: A COILED BASKET
Tuesday, November 27, 2001
Instructors: Martha Rosenberg and Kathy Walsh
Local Torrey Pine needles provided to make an elegant basket. Beginners welcome. Bring a towel and a bucket.
Fee: $20, all supplies included.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENT
Tuesday, December 4, 2001
Instructors: Velma West and Marie Walsh
Choose Christmas or Chanukah colors
Fee: $50, all materials supplied
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GOURD JEWELRY MAKING
Tuesday, December 11, 2001
Instructor: Kathy Walsh
Make a special gift for someone using a miniature gourd and knotless netting or other embellishment.
Fee: $15, all materials supplied.

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Book Reviews

VARIEGATED PLANTS: The Encyclopedia of Patterned Foliage
Susan Conder, Photographs by Andrew Lawson
Portland, Timber Press, 2001, 191 pages, 244 color photos, 10"x 9¾", softcover, $24.95

Flower gardens may come and go with the seasons, but the rich tones of variegated foliage provide a lasting texture of contrasts and forms. As this book illustrates, there is actually a wide range of color in variegated leaves, from various tones of white, ivory, and beige to many shades of green, splashed with reds, yellows, and purples. Plant breeders have responded to growing interest in variegated foliage with new variegated versions of old plant favorites.

The author introduces his subject with valuable suggestions for placement of variegated plants and provides a name guide of "Linnaean epithets," his term for the horticultural labels, such as alba, glauca, and rubra, for white, grey, and red coloration, which describe plant features.

The main sections of the book are organized into types of plant material, beginning with annuals and biennials, going on to "tender plants," which will actually be the most familiar to local readers, and perennials, many of which are not grown in these parts. It's the reverse of the usual situation with books focused on four season climates.

This book is handsomely designed, with text descriptions accompanied by color photos in a variety of formats. As the author remarks at the beginning, too many variegated plants in one place can be overwhelming, and the same could be said of so much of the same in one book. But the abundant variety of variegated plants is impressive and could easily lead to other inspirations in the garden.

Reviewed by Marge Howard-Jones

GARDENS OF NEW ORLEANS: Exquisite Excess
Lake Douglas and Jeanette Hardy
San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 2001. 208 pages, color throughout, 10⅛" x 10⅛", hardcover, $27.95

Weather and history dominate gardening in the "Big Easy", and for Southern Californians, this book is like a trip to another planet. "Bombastic" is how the authors describe their local climate, with its long summer droughts and winter freezes that apparently have done nothing to impair seriously the rampant growth of trees, shrubs, and vines. The sky is rarely visible in the luscious photos that illustrate this book.

The city's history as a French and then Spanish outpost is reflected in the narrow grid pattern of streets and lots and the small scale of graceful balconies and courtyards of the older quarters, now neatly gentrified into an environment smothered with plant life. Oaks, magnolias, and crepe myrtles shade streets overlooked by small gardens and balconies whose ornate grillwork is covered with potted plants and vines.

Following a nicely illustrated city history, the authors lead us on a garden tour of balconies and courtyards, cottages and shotgun houses, all within the city. Then we follow them along the streetcar route through the garden districts to Carrolton, visiting the grand gardens of mansions built on land that once belonged to vast plantations. Here, where Anglo-American influences are more in evidence, are formal gardens with lawns and parterres and more huge trees.

Next are art gardens, whose owners have incorporated their collections and own works of sculpture into their garden settings. Lastly, we come to house museums, formerly grand homes that are now open to the public. The importance of garden making is found in the history of LongVue, a 1923 home, whose owners acceded to the wishes of their landscape architect and had their house moved off the site in the late '30s so that a new structure more complementary to the garden might be built.

Reviewed by Marge Howard-Jones

BREEDING ORNAMENTAL PLANTS
Dorothy J. Callaway and M. Brett Callaway, editors
Portland, Timber Press, 2000, 323 pages, 17 color photos, 6¼" x 9¼", hardcover, $34.95

This is a book for plant enthusiasts who want to create new forms of their favorite plants. The editors who have also authored the first two chapters discuss genetics in general in the first chapter and the practical issues of how to go about breeding plants in the second chapter, even with suggestions on how to select a cultivar name.

Then fifteen experts give information on the history of their plant specialty and detailed information on what is called "Hybridization Mechanics" or the actual step-by-step techniques. If your interest in plants includes one of these, this would be a good book to pursue and expand your knowledge of them. Those included are: *Amaryllis,* Aroids, *Camellia, Hemerocallis, Hosta, Iris* (Siberian), *Kalmia, Magnolia, Narcissus, Penstemon, Rhododendron, Saintpaulia, Sinningia* (and other Gesneriads), and *Syringa* (lilac). The surprising genus included is *Quercus*. Since oaks are famous for hybridizing on their own, I would not have expected information on their hybridizing. Guy Sternberg who wrote this chapter maintains a private research arboretum and is developing oaks for the nursery trade. His background includes both the Illinois Native Plant Society and the International Oak Society.

Reviewed by R. Cox

SOME BOOKS UNDER $20 SUITABLE FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS

CAMELLIAS: A Curator's Introduction to the Camellia Collection in the Huntington Botanical Gardens
Ann Richardson
San Marino, Huntington Library Press, 2001, 80 pages, 88 color photos, 6¼″ x 9¼″, hardcover, $27.95, **softcover $14.95**

From a brief history of camellias to a map of where to find them growing in Huntington Gardens, this lovely small volume tells us nearly all we need to know about this very unusual shrub. Unusual, because of the wide range of varieties, hybrids, and cultivars that have been developed or discovered since the early eighteenth century. That is when the English, hoping to outsmart the Chinese monopoly on tea produced from *Camellia sinensis*, mistakenly imported *Camellia japonica*, instead.

Color photos of many, many beautiful blooms explain how dismay turned to excitement as the English recognized the true value of camellias in their gardens. The author describes, and photos illustrate, the seven different petal formations of the three (out of two hundred known) major species: early blooming sasanquas, classic japonicas, and exuberant reticulatas. That these plants seem to readily produce variations that can be propagated is just another factor in their uniqueness.

A complete description of how and where to grow camellias and simple remedies for spider mite, cankers, and petal blight, add to the book's utility. Best of all, the author directs the reader to the same Southern California nursery, Nuccio's in Altadena, that supplies the Huntington with much of its camellia collection.

Reviewed by Marge Howard-Jones

THE MEANING OF HERBS: MYTH, LANGUAGE AND LORE
Gretchen Scoble and Ann Field
Text by Ann Fiery
San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 2001, 108 pages, 53 color photos, 6¼″ x 8¼″, hardcover $16.95

This sly little book is just what the title says it is, and a bit more. Wit and art enliven its short discourses on thirty herbs with accompanying quirky photo collages whose relevance to their subjects are often subtle but always effective.

A thick red cross, with garlic buds nestled in each corner clearly expresses the many medicinal uses for this herb; less obvious are the snippets of savory, once forbidden for pregnant women, on the seat of a small child's chair. Purely aesthetic associations are found in summer scenes of the beach framing strawberries and a half-covered portrait of Mao, decorated with a red badge of Oriental characters, which signifies cilantro, also known as Chinese parsley. Old fashioned calligraphy heads the page for each herb. The texts are presented in type face combinations that inform the reader of the herbs' traditional uses, or beliefs connected with them, or the Victorian interpretations of their names, or perhaps even a word or two in growing them. It's all rather droll, and fun to read.

Reviewed by Marge Howard-Jones

CLEMATIS: The Complete Guide
Ruth Gooch
No. Pomfret, VT., Crowood Press, Distributed by Trafalgar Square, 2001, 184 pages, 25 color photos, 40 line drawings, 5″ x 8″, softcover, $19.95

This softcover edition of the guide that was first published in 1996 covers history, planting, feeding, pruning, propagation, and growing using artificial or natural supports. This information is followed by *Clematis* portraits that are grouped by species: *C. alpina, cirrhosa, florida, heracleifolia, integrifolia, macropetala, montana, texensis*, and *viticella* including their many cultivars. The author is an experienced grower, hybridist and has her own clematis nursery. She mentions the dispute about the pronunciation of the genus, listing **clem**-u-tis as that favored over cle-**may**-tis and cle-**matt**-is. A good book for those new to *Clematis* growing.

LICHEN DYES: The New Source Book
Karen Diadick Casselman
Mineola, N.Y., Dover Publications, 2001, 82 pages, 5⅝″ x 8½″, softcover, $7.95

This Dover book is the second edition of the 1996 book. Forty percent of the text has been revised.

It includes the history of Asian, southern and northern European, and North American lichen dyes along with safe methods and techniques, eco dyes and alternative mordants, and a chapter on ethics and lichen identification.

POTTED GARDENS: New Plants and New Approaches for Container Gardens
Scott D. Appell, Editor
Brooklyn, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 2001, 111 pages, 6″ x 9″ Color throughout, softcover, $9.95

This book gives information on designing, planting, and maintaining a container garden. These gardens include water gardens in small containers as well as planter boxes and hanging gardens. Unusual and drought-resistant plants for pots, plant combinations, and a list of mail-order sources also are covered in the text along with good, clear illustrations and photos.

FAVORITE FLOWERS
Deborah Kellaway
Watercolours by Elizabeth Blackadder
No. Pomfret, Vt., Trafalgar Square Publishing, 1999, 102 pages, 40 color illustrations, 10 b&w drawings, 9″ x 7″, softcover, $16.95

This collection of forty flower paintings by contemporary artist Elizabeth Blackadder has an interesting commentary by Deborah Kellaway. She includes its history, how it has been used in paintings, and a little information on growing (or not) the eleven genera included.

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E-mail: cmdoggett@cs.com
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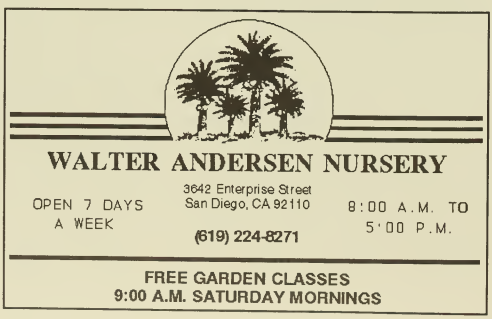

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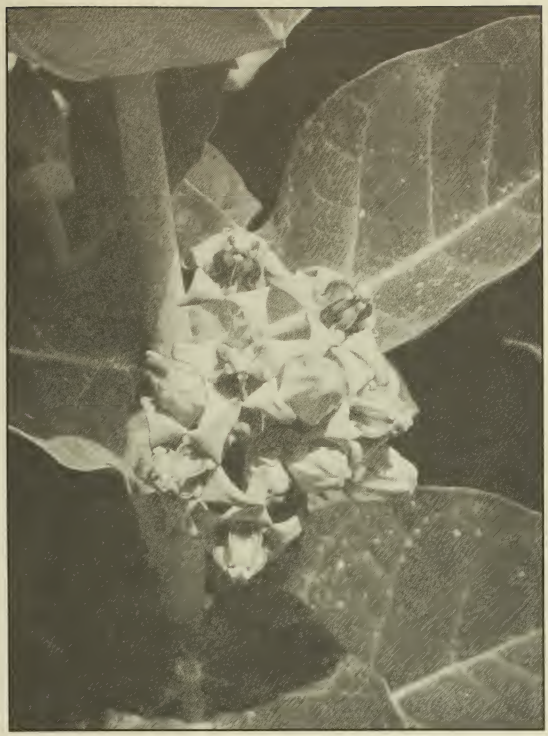

Calotropis gigantea
Photograph by Catherine R. Bleick of Sun Ad Art

Additional photograph on page 184.

Calotropis gigantea

Near the entrance to the Botanical Building in Balboa Park are two large plants with 9″ soft, thick, gray-green leaves covered with silky, whitish fuzz. *Calotropis gigantea,* commonly known as crown flower or giant milkweed, is a handsome plant even when out of bloom. But it looks even better when its unusual whitish-purple flower heads appear. Yet it reaches its peak of beauty in the fall and winter when its subtle shades of green, white, and purple are enhanced by spots of vivid orange with markings of black—the wings of the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*).

Giant milkweed is part of the huge Asclepiadaceae (milkweed family) on which the female monarch butterfly will alight to lay her eggs. The caterpillars that hatch will nibble on the milkweed leaves and eventually form chrysalises, out of which will emerge adult monarchs.

Some well-meaning persons are perplexed by the sight of the monarch caterpillars. According to Johnny Stellini, the nursery gardener, one person came to him with handfuls of caterpillars, saying, "You have worms all over your plants." Stellini explained to him that the "worms" would eventually become gorgeous monarch butterflies. Pruning the plants can present a problem. "I make sure I cut back only one bush at a time," he said, "so that the caterpillars always have enough to eat."

If you grow your own, Stellini suggests watering once a week—every two weeks in cool weather and pruning back to 4-6″ in March. It starts growing when weather warms up, up to 8 feet. He says that it is not necessary to fertilize.

Besides providing sustenance to monarch butterflies, *Calotropis gigantea* is used as a traditional medicinal plant in its native India. It also yields a durable fiber, and its floss is used for stuffing purposes. □

Pat Pawlowski and Editorial Staff

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